



Smog Check Advisory

September 2003 — February 2004



Paul Hedglin, Air Quality Engineer for the Bureau of Automotive Repair, demonstrates a BAR-97 Emissions Inspection System (EIS).

BAR-90 Analyzer Replacement

Starting January 1, 2004, Smog Check stations located in basic and change-of-ownership areas are required to use the BAR-97 Emissions Inspection System (EIS) platform, without a dynamometer.

The regulation requiring Smog Check stations in basic and change-of-ownership areas to replace the BAR-90 test analyzer and install a new and improved emissions analyzer was adopted in July 2003.

The BAR is committed to improving California's air quality and meeting all federal and state emission reduction requirements. However, existing BAR-90 analyzers were not able to support changes that have been made to the Smog Check program to implement state and federal law. Changes to the program include an OBD II functional test, integrated fuel cap test, and entries

BAR-90 Analyzer
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Advisory Group Creates Educational Notice for ARDs

Pilot to Begin March 1st

The Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) Advisory Group, responding to a request by industry leaders for written notifications to automotive repair shop owners, has created a new "Advisory Notice." The notice will alert automotive repair shop owners that they and their employees need to review Automotive Repair Act and/or Smog Check laws and regulations.

The BAR Advisory Group is comprised of industry representatives, educators, independent station owners and consumer groups. Thanks to the hard work of the Advisory Group, BAR is ready to initiate the new "Advisory Notice" program. Following a recommendation by Marty Keller, Executive Director of the California Automotive Repair Coalition, the Advisory Group

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New Law Extends Biennial Smog Check Exceptions for Some Parts of California

In the more metropolitan areas of California that have greater air pollution, vehicles that are four or more years old must have a biennial (every other year) Smog Check performed for registration renewal.

However, because of a new law (AB 2637, Statutes of 2002), in specified areas, where the air quality would not be negatively impacted, the biennial Smog Check for vehicle registration renewal is not required until a vehicle is more than 6 years old. This two-year extension applies only in specified areas to vehicles that have registration renewals due on or after January 1, 2004.

This narrower list of areas is due to a finding by the Air Resources Board that a statewide, two-year extension would negatively impact air quality.

Regardless of the age of a vehicle or where it is registered, each time a vehicle changes ownership or is being initially registered in California, a Smog Check certificate is required, including newer vehicles.

The chart below, titled "Areas Included in the Smog Check Exception," shows the areas included in the Smog Check exception.

If the vehicle model is six or fewer years old, check to see if the county where the

vehicle is registered is listed in this chart. If the county is not listed under the "All ZIP Codes Included" section, check to see if it is listed under the section titled "Some ZIP Codes Included."

If the county is listed under this section, review the chart titled "Affected ZIP Codes for Partial Counties" to determine if the ZIP code where the vehicle is registered is included in the list.

If the ZIP code is listed, then the vehicle is exempt from the biennial smog check. The table titled "Vehicle Model Year Exceptions" lists the year when a vehicle that meets the exception criteria will need its first biennial Smog Check.

Areas Included in the Smog Check Exception

All ZIP Codes Included

| | | |
|----------|-----------------|------------|
| Butte | Nevada | Santa Cruz |
| Colusa | San Benito | Shasta |
| Glenn | San Luis Obispo | Tehama |
| Monterey | Santa Barbara | Yuba |

Some ZIP Codes Included

| | | |
|-------------|-----------|--------|
| Kern | San Mateo | Marin |
| Santa Clara | Napa | Sonoma |
| San Diego | Sutter | |

Affected ZIP Codes for Partial Counties:

Kern

| | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 93501 | 93505 | 93519 | 93523 | 93524 |
| 93527 | 93528 | 93554 | 93555 | |

Marin

| | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 94924 | 94929 | 94933 | 94937 | 94938 |
| 94940 | 94946 | 94950 | 94956 | 94963 |
| 94970 | 94971 | | | |

Napa

| | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 94503 | 94508 | 94515 | 94562 | 94567 |
| 94573 | 94574 | 94576 | | |

San Diego

| | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 91917 | 91935 | 92035 | 92061 | 92065 |
| 92082 | | | | |

San Mateo

| | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 94018 | 94019 | 94020 | 94021 | 94037 |
| 94038 | 94060 | 94074 | | |

Santa Clara

| | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|--|
| 94550 | 95023 | 95076 | 95140 | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|--|

Sonoma

| | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 94515 | 94972 | 95416 | 95431 | 95433 |
| 95442 | 95452 | 95476 | 95487 | |

Sutter

| | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 95622 | 95950 | 95953 | 95957 | 95982 |
| 95991 | 95992 | 95993 | | |

Vehicle Model-Year Exceptions

| Model Year | First Year Smog Check Required |
|------------|--------------------------------|
| 2000 | 2006 |
| 2001 | 2007 |
| 2002 | 2008 |
| 2003 | 2009 |
| 2004 | 2010 |

Smog Check Advisory

Enhanced Smog Check Implementations

It's been a busy year and a-half for the Smog Check team.

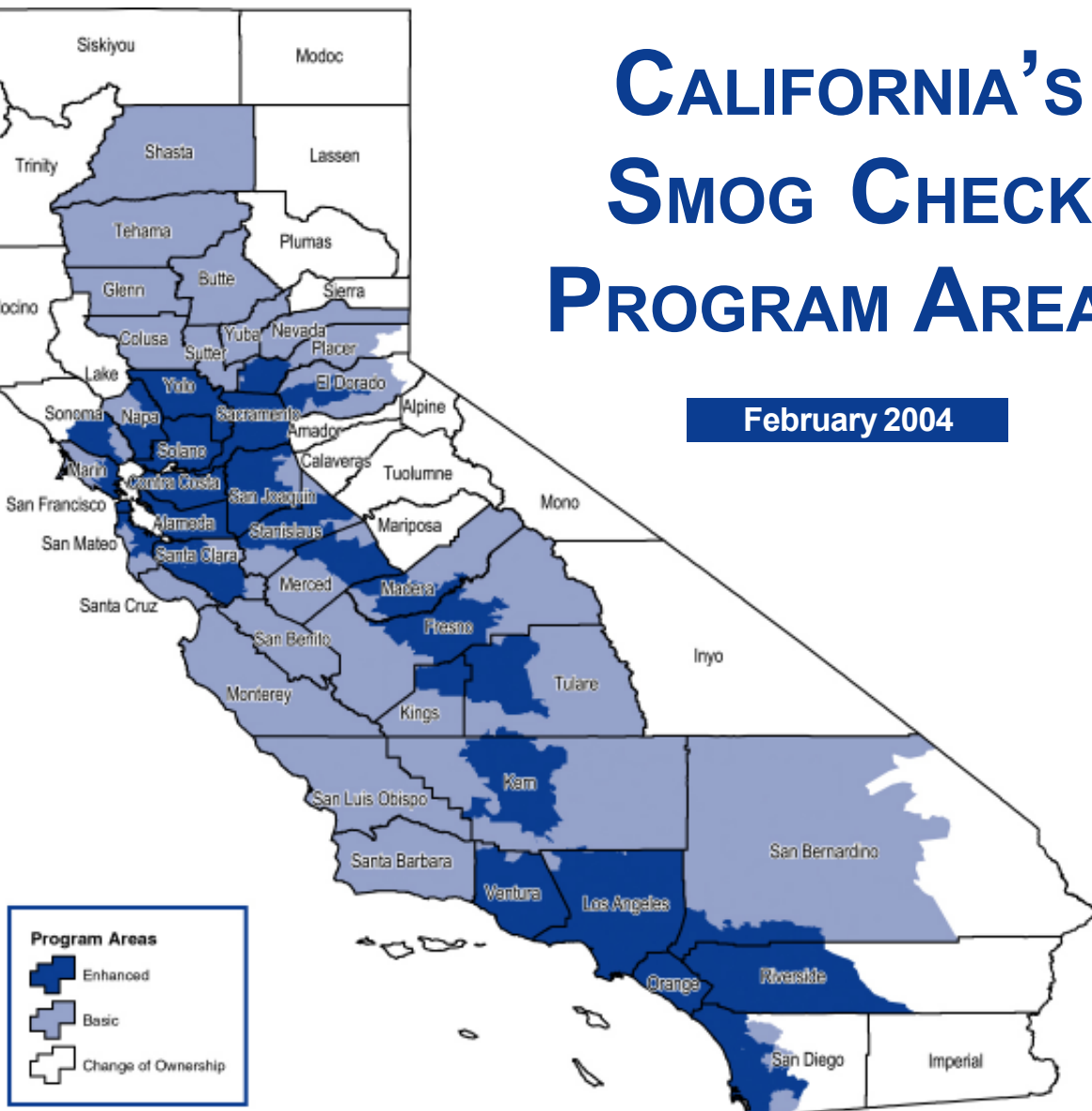
Since May 2002, the Smog Check industry has helped BAR successfully bring more than six million vehicles into California's Enhanced Smog Check Program.

Congratulations and thank you for your commitment to the program.

| Area | Vehicles | Implemented |
|------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| El Dorado County APCD | 92,000 | Dec. 1, 2003 |
| San Francisco Bay Area | 4,800,000 | Oct. 1, 2003 |
| Placer County APCD | 58,000 | April 1, 2003 |
| Yolo-Solano AQMD | 71,000 | April 1, 2003 |
| South Coast AQMD | 246,000 | Nov. 1, 2002 |
| Sacramento Metro AQMD | 29,000 | July 1, 2002 |
| Ventura County APCD | 31,000 | July 1, 2002 |
| San Joaquin APCD | 722,000 | May 1, 2002 |
| TOTAL | 6,049,000 | |

CALIFORNIA'S SMOG CHECK PROGRAM AREAS

February 2004



Update on Industry Ombudsman

The Bureau of Automotive Repair's (BAR) Industry Ombudsman is already proving to be a valuable liaison between auto repair dealers, Smog Check licensees, automotive associations and BAR.

In his first couple of months, Industry Ombudsman Rick Fong has received more than 100 phone calls and e-mails from shop owners and technicians who have questions or concerns regarding BAR.

The most common issues revolve around questions regarding laws, regulations or enforcement actions.

"BAR takes all concerns seriously," says Fong. "The Ombudsman is available to help resolve misunderstandings that may arise between station owners and BAR. Because I work independently of BAR management staff, I can help resolve problems and ensure that concerns receive a complete and speedy review."



Rick Fong

For Smog Check, Fong has helped station owners who have questions about Smog Check equipment manufacturers, the Gold Shield program, Test-Only stations and other regulations relating to the Smog Check program

Fong says when a telephone call or e-mail comes in, he interviews the person for details and begins research by talking to all parties involved. He then works toward resolving the issue or connecting the person with someone at BAR who can help.

"The response I've gotten from those who have reached out to me has been very positive," Fong says. "My role as Ombudsman has been very gratifying because many of the cases I have dealt with have been successfully resolved."

Fong can be reached with questions and comments at (916) 255-2893, or online at BAR_Ombudsman@dca.ca.gov.

Advisory Group Meeting Schedule

To increase the level of communication between BAR, the automotive repair industry, and consumers, the Department of Consumer Affairs and BAR established a BAR Advisory Group in 2001.

The group is balanced to represent consumer, industry, educational and environmental interests. An informal assembly, the advisory group meets quarterly to provide input to the Chief on BAR program issues.

Following is a schedule of upcoming meeting dates. The meetings are open to the public. Please check out locations and agendas on BAR's Web site.

Upcoming Meetings

April 12, 2004

July 12, 2004

October 18, 2004

January 10, 2005

New Smog Check Technician Licensing Exams

The Smog Check Technician licensing examinations have been updated. Examinations are periodically updated to keep the contents current and to help ensure that the items in the examination have not been overexposed.

Exam questions are written in structured workshops by licensed technicians. Before a test question is finalized and placed in an exam item bank, it is reviewed by other technicians a number of times. BAR used additional licensed technicians and followed standard examination development methods to evaluate the difficulty of each question. The results were used to determine if the level of difficulty of each test was equivalent to the examination that was being replaced.

The updated tests also feature fewer questions. A review of exam statistics has found that the exams can be just as

effective if they contain fewer questions. The new exams allow slightly more time per question than the older version of the exams. However, since the total number of questions is less, the total time allotted for each exam has been reduced from 3 hours to 2.5 hours.

Candidates now taking the new Advanced (EA) examination must get a minimum of 75 correct out of 100 questions to achieve a passing score. Those now testing for the new Basic (EB) examination must get a minimum of 67 correct out of 99 questions to pass the examination.

Since the overall time to take the exam was reduced, BAR also reduced the administration fee per exam from the \$65 to \$53. If you have questions about any of the new testing changes, please visit www.smogcheck.ca.gov or call BAR headquarters at (916) 255-4300.

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Update Information for Smog Check Technician Exam Candidate Handbook

Please add the following updates to your 2002 Smog Check Technician Exam Candidate Handbook:

- The Smog Check Technician Licensing Examination is now used only for initially obtaining a license. License renewals are accomplished by completing an update course at a BAR-certified institution, and submitting a renewal application to BAR.
- The Examination Plan for the Basic Area Technician License remains the same. However, the total number of questions on the current exam is 99, with 67 the minimum passing score. The difficulty level is equivalent to that of the exam being replaced.
- The Examination Plan for the Advanced Emission Technician License remains the same. However, the total number of questions on the current exam is 100, with 75 the minimum passing score. The difficulty level is equivalent to that of the exam being replaced.
- The Smog Check Technician Examination fee charged by Experior Assessments changed on November 1, 2003 to \$53.00.
- The following Experior Test Centers have been closed: Alameda, Diamond Bar and Sacramento.
- The available Experior Test Centers are in Ceritos, Colton, Fremont, Fresno, Rancho Cordova, San Diego, San Francisco and Van Nuys.
- The new San Francisco Test Center is located at:
**222 Kearny Street, Suite 603
(Near 3rd & Market)
San Francisco, CA 94108
(415) 834-1357**

The Bottom Line

- On November 1, 2003, the EB and EA examinations were updated. The new examinations feature fewer examination items. As a result, the number of correct items required to pass was reduced for each examination. The new EA examination now consists of 100 items and requires that 75 items be answered correctly to receive a passing score. The revised EB examination now consists of 99 items and requires that 67 be answered correctly to receive a passing score.

2003 Annual Testing Totals by License Type

| License Class | # Tested | # Pass | % Pass |
|---------------|----------|--------|--------|
| EA | 5,682 | 3,347 | 58.91% |
| EB | 227 | 169 | 74.45% |
| Brake A | 170 | 104 | 61.18% |
| Brake B | 14 | 3 | 21.43% |
| Brake C | 441 | 319 | 72.34% |
| Lamp | 506 | 358 | 70.75% |

Smog Check Technician Data

| | |
|---|--------|
| Total statewide Advanced (EA) Technicians | 12,971 |
| Total statewide Basic (EB) Technicians | 1,238 |

Count of Stations by Station Type January 2004

| | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Gold Shield | 590 |
| Test-Only | 1,284 |
| Test and Repair | 5,596 |

Consumer Assistance Program Data Fiscal Year 2002-2003 Total

| | |
|---|--------|
| Total number of vehicles repaired | 35,617 |
|---|--------|

Educational Advisory Committee Continues to Provide Valuable Service to BAR

In 1997, an educational volunteer committee was formed to advise the Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) on Smog Check technician training matters.

The Educational Advisory Committee (EAC) consists of teachers and automotive technicians.

Since its formation, the EAC has provided valuable information to BAR on issues such as industry rules and regulations, and new student educational course requirements.

The EAC is recognized in the automotive industry as one of the leading technician training programs in the country.

Rick Escalambre, of Skyline College in San Bruno, currently serves as chairman of the Educational Advisory Committee.

Escalambre met with BAR representatives and EAC members at BAR Headquarters on September 29, 2003 to discuss the following Smog Check Technician training items:

- Updating the Basic Area Clean Air Car Course and the BAR ASE Alternative courses;
- The subject matter of the next update training course;
- Proposed new BAR instructor and school regulations;

- New BAR instructor certification process;
- Updating of emissions test equipment used by certified schools; and
- The pilot “Clean Car” program operated by BAR’s Field Operations Division. (See article in the May-August 2003 *Smog Check Advisory*.)

The EAC supported the proposed regulations and the new instructor certification process. The Committee recommended that BAR ask certified instructors and others to determine what changes are needed in the courses noted above. BAR has contacted the instructors, and is currently accepting suggestions.

One of the major issues raised by the EAC during the meeting was the need to work closely with students for whom English is a second language.

According to the automotive technicians who work with the students, many haven’t grasped how to use basic hand tools. To combat this problem, the committee suggested the training facilities hire more bilingual teachers and have them develop additional curriculum.

The EAC meets semiannually. Its next meeting will take place in Spring 2004. The specific date and an agenda will be posted in advance on BAR’s Web site.

New Laws for 2004

Effective: January 1, 2004

SB 708

Senate Bill 708 (Florez, D-Shafter) increases by \$35 the base fine for a second or subsequent violation of Vehicle Code Section 27153 or Vehicle Code Section 27153.5 for unlawful discharge of motor vehicle exhaust.

Revenue from the increased fines will go towards paying a county’s cost of establishing and conducting a combined vehicle and sobriety checkpoint program.

The bill also allows a low-income owner of an “excessively smoking” vehicle who was issued a “notice to correct” to participate in BAR’s Consumer Assistance Program, if the vehicle subject to that notice has failed a Smog Check inspection subsequent to receiving the notice.

AB 377

Assembly Bill 377 (Chan, D-Oakland) prohibits a motor vehicle from being equipped or operated with a “whistle-tip” on its exhaust pipe (\$250 fine), and prohibits a person from engaging in the business of installing a “whistle-tip” (\$1,000 fine).

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agreed to begin the new “Advisory Notices” under a six-month pilot program.

Beginning March 1, the new “Advisory Notice” will be provided to the responsible managing employee of a repair shop and mailed to the shop owner when BAR field staff determine that shop personnel need additional education about particular laws and regulations.

The “Advisory Notice” will be sent if it appears that certain procedures and regulations aren’t being followed. The notice replaces the current verbal process of alerting the shop manager only.

“Shop management still felt they needed an effective management tool that would be sent to licensees of BAR for managing the performance of their employees and themselves,” said Dennis DeCota, Executive Director, California Service Station and Automotive Repair Association (CSSARA). “There was a desire for some type of official process from BAR without the danger of being sued because of a minor infraction of the Automotive Repair Act.”

BAR plans to have the “Advisory Notice” accompanied by a cover letter explaining the document and seeking the repair shop owner’s input if their shop receives one during the six-month pilot.

“The BAR Advisory Group has developed a ‘BAR Advisory Notice’ to inform shop owners about compliance issues,” said Brian Maas, of the California Motor Car Dealers Association. “These new notices will give car dealers and other ARDs the information they need to correct problems *before* they warrant any formal disciplinary action.”

“We’re pleased to be moving ahead with this pilot program,” said BAR Chief Patrick Dorais. “Everyone involved in this project, from repair shop owners to BAR staff, wants to create a fair system that balances our interests for consumer protection with the needs of the shop owner.”

“This new Advisory Notice ... will help you... if you just follow its advice,” said Paul Frech, owner of C & F Auto (GoldShield/CAP station), and president of the Automotive Trade Organizations of California.

“CSSARA appreciates the hard work that the BAR’s management has done in working with industry on this very important issue,” added DeCota.

Look for more information on the new “Advisory Notice” in the coming weeks on BAR’s Web site (www.smogcheck.ca.gov) and in the Winter edition of the *Repair Reporter*. A sample of the “Advisory Notice” will be posted on the Web site, as well as being printed in the next issue of the *Repair Reporter*.

BAR-90 Analyzer

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for an evaporative emission system functional test and liquid fuel leaks. BAR-97s are capable of performing all of the above tests. BAR-90s cannot perform these tests.

In addition, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find parts and service for BAR-90 equipment.

BAR advises station owners to ensure that the BAR-97 EIS equipment they have purchased or are considering for purchase, meets BAR’s December 2002 Specifications.

The manufacturer or equipment dealer should provide commitments regarding product performance, warranty, service, and update costs in writing. Visit BAR’s Web site (www.smogcheck.ca.gov) to review the certification status of various BAR-97 EIS platforms.

Field Office Moves

The BAR Canoga Park Field Office has moved to Valencia. Below is the new information.

Valencia Field Office

27202 Turnberry Lane

Suite 250

Valencia, CA 91355

(818) 596-4400

For information on disciplinary actions and Smog Check citations, check the BAR Web site at www.smogcheck.ca.gov.



*Bureau of Automotive Repair
10240 Systems Parkway
Sacramento, CA 95827*

BAR FIELD OFFICE PHONE NUMBERS

| | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Bakersfield | (661) 833-6304 |
| Culver City | (310) 410-0024 |
| Fresno | (559) 445-5015 |
| Oceanside | (760) 439-0942 |
| Placentia | (714) 961-7940 |
| Richmond | (510) 243-9410 |
| Riverside | (909) 782-4250 |
| Sacramento | (916) 255-4200 |
| San Jose | (408) 277-1860 |
| South El Monte | (626) 575-6934 |
| Valencia | (818) 596-4400 |

OTHER HELPFUL NUMBERS

| | |
|---|----------------|
| DCA Consumer Information Center | (800) 952-5210 |
| BAR Licensing | (916) 255-3145 |
| ET Help Desk | (866) 860-8509 |
| Industry Ombudsman | (916) 255-2893 |
| MCI | (800) 731-SMOG |
| (Then, press "5" for technical support) | |
| Referee Scheduling Center | (800) 622-7733 |
| Parts Locator Service | (800) 826-3566 |

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If you have news stories or other items you'd like to submit for publication in the *Smog Check Advisory*, please send them to:

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